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Clean-up continues on creek

Sealed waste cell will hold soil from Dead Creek

BY JASON WHITE
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A study on Dead Creek is winding down, but much remains to be done, representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Solutia Inc. told about 30 people at the Cahokia town meeting last Tuesday.

About 80 percent of sampling is complete. EPA remedial project manager Mike McAteer said. Workers gathered samples of soil, ground and surface water, air, plants and animals.

Work still to be done includes digging two wells into bedrock and taking soil samples from yards, McAteer said.

Many of the samples have yet to be tested, he said.

"All of the data has to be validated," he said. "That takes some time."

A report on the study's findings will eventually be issued to the public.

In the meantime, planning continues on what to do with contaminated soil from the creek bed and adjacent landfills.

Kevin Turner, an EPA on-scene coordinator, said a crew has removed 1,442 drums and shipped 6,700 tons of contaminated soil by train to Oklahoma from Site Q, about 40 acres of vacant land between the Mississippi River floodwall and the Alton Railroad spur.

Turner said his team is now focusing its efforts on two ponds north of Cargill Road that are popular fishing spots when the river floods. The clean-up will continue into March, he said.

"After that time, I'm going to run out of money, and we're going to reevaluate what's going to happen at Site Q," he said.

In an effort to alleviate flooding, Solutia will install larger culverts at two locations on the creek near Site Q, he said.

"That will help to move the

Creek

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water quicker from the farther upstream areas," he said.

Solutia and the EPA are still working out details for removing soil from the creekbed, which runs through residential areas in Cahokia. The sediments are contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls, which were banned in the 1970s after animal tests showed they cause liver damage and cancer.

The plan is to build a 25-foot high cell on five acres of vacant land owned by Solutia and located just south of Sauget Village Hall.

The cell will be designed to federal standards that minimize the possibility of leakage by using layers of plastic and clay on the cell's top and bottom.

The mound-shaped cell may be covered with gravel to reduce erosion during a flood, although that has not been decided yet. Another idea is to cover it with a green material to make it less visible.

"I believe it will always be there," Turner said.

The EPA will hold a public meeting later this month as more details emerge about the plan.

In response to a resident's question, Solutia officials at the meet-

ing said the company would not have agreed to fund the study if other companies were still dumping waste in Dead Creek.

"There's no evidence that there are any current discharges into Dead Creek," said Michael Light, Solutia's remedial projects manager.

Solutia, a spinoff of Monsanto's chemical division, is the only one of 26 individuals and companies to agree to an EPA order to fund a \$3 million study of four miles of Dead Creek and surrounding areas that have been used as dumping sites since the 1930s.